

## **MTM/VF EIS**

### **Community Narrative: Werth, WV**

**Interviewer:** We started to talk a little bit about your Mom living in this house. How did your Mom and her family come to live in this area? And this place particularly?

**Subject:** Because it was a place that was for sale that my Dad could afford at the time. He was a farmer. He had been saving up to buy one and this is the one he bought. I do not know any particulars.

**Interviewer:** What kind of farming did they do?

**Subject:** We raised corn and hay and hogs and farm boys and pigs and things that we could survive with.

**Interviewer:** You said the house was built. Did they build the house then they moved here?

**Subject:** “Specific name.” I don’t remember which “specific name” but probably, maybe “specific name”. But one of the “Specific name” built that. “Specific name” from Calhoun.

**Interviewer:** Did you grow up here in this house then?

**Subject:** From the time I was seven years old.

**Interviewer:** Seven, umm, umm. Lived here and went to school in the area?

**Subject:** I went to school at McMillan Creek School. About a mile and a half down the road.

**Interviewer:** Had everything from grade school to .....

**Subject:** One through eight grade. One room.

**Interviewer:** You started to tell us when we were standing outside, about what time did the surface mining and strip mining start in this area?

**Subject:** I would probably say that excavators started up 15 years. That would be the North site or that property probably 1944-45. And then this coal mine over here probably 1950 or ’51.

**Interviewer:** And were these surface mines or underground?

**Subject:** They were surface mines. And I’m not, I wouldn’t swear to those statement but that is the best that I can remember right now.

**Interviewer:** You were about how old then?

**Subject:** Probably eight or ten.

**Interviewer:** Eight or ten. Do you remember, a part of what the study is looking at is for a community that is adjacent to the surface mining what kind of changes may have occurred - from when before the mining was there to when the mining was there and then once it left. Did you notice and changes in the community?

**Subject:** Oh sure. They ...the fields were are all flooded with debris from the mines. And plus my father sold probably 80 or 90 acres, which he spent the money from that trying to get his property back into shape again. And it was just a round robin- for us. And then this mine up here set off blast that would cause our well to go dry. They did drill a new well. Then we would get quite a bit of runoff from that mine too showing up on this side here.

**Interviewer:** So when your father sold off ..... let me back up for a second. What kind of debris are you talking about?

**Subject:** I am talking about rock, slate, goobs- probably a little coal - anything that they, dirt, anything that they would dig up on top of the mountain, when it rained it came down.

**Interviewer:** It filled up your fields? and ponds?

**Subject:** It filled up the creeks. It filled up the creek beds and the creek would be wandering around and basically make into a swamp. Which the wetlands commission now want it to be a swamp but it never was a swamp before. So I don't know what will happen there. And I am getting too old to be battling this stuff. I am retired and I want to be retired. I don't want to ignore it but I don't want to put forth a lot of effort.

**Interviewer:** I can understand that when you are retired that is the whole idea you don't want to have to put forth a lot of effort into much at all if you don't want to do it.

**Subject:** Well, I retired when I was 56. But I came down when my Mom, she was in bad shape mentally and that went on for 11 years, so I haven't been retired really.

**Interviewer:** Umhummm... You mentioned your father sold off 80 or 90 acres. He sold it to the company for mining?

**Subject:** Tassa Coal Co.

**Interviewer:** And then was that land that he had been farming?

**Subject:** Ah, some of it was the roadway across there he sold the right-of-way to that. We had

been farming that. Ah, now that that goes up the mountain. Now the mountainside we didn't farm. So, most of it was not land that we farmed. It was woodland.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember at all any of the interactions between the Coal Co. and your father about selling that property?

**Subject:** Actually the Coal Co. worked with a "specific name". His house is down where -the one they are remodeling and fixing up. Ah, "specific name" and "specific name". I have some maps and things I probably should have brought them, but I didn't know what we were going to do. But my father was friends with him. Probably up until my father figured out what was happening to him. So actually Tassa Coal had "specific name" and "specific name" and there was one other person, I have documents at home, to ummm, they brought the land from my father. And they, like I said they strip mined it up there, took the top of the mountain off, got the coal out and they trucked it off the hill.

**Interviewer:** So the coal company was working with some of the property owners in the community. They bought it from your father and then they gave it to the coal company? Or they .....

**Subject:** That is what it looked like to me.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember at all before the coal mining started any interactions between the company and the community about coming in?

**Subject:** No. Nope. That was 1954. Back then things were done quite a bit differently. We did have you people to protect us.

**Interviewer:** Well, we are trying to catch up unfortunately, I guess, with this problem. Were there specifics, you said that there, in terms of changes with the community there were some real physical changes to the environment. Were there any changes in terms of people moving out or people moving in? Or for example, the school that you mentioned? Was there any changes in the population that might have affected the school?

**Subject:** I don't think there was a big affect. There weren't that many people. But Raven down there use to be like deep mine and that kind. Deep mines were sort of going defunct. A lot of people that worked for the strip mines moved into those houses. You know where Raven is?

**Interviewer:** It is down 55 a little bit?

**Subject:** Right. There is that row of houses there. They built those houses for the deep mines that were adjacent to them. Then when that slowed down. The strip job was going pretty well and people came from Clarksburg, or where ever they got their people from, and lived in those houses.

**Interviewer II:** They actually didn't try, the population base wasn't large enough here that they didn't try to tap into local ...

**Subject:** I don't think it changed it very much. I think that the people that were living there working in the deep mines had to go somewhere else. How many people stayed and how many people left I wouldn't know. But for a while there, there were a few more people here. That mine didn't last that long. Another company came and depends on the value of the coal, another company came and worked it awhile.

**Interviewer:** Did your mother talk about,..... you mentioned the blasting from the mines. Did she talk about, and you certainly would have known .....

**Subject:** She talked about getting knocked off her chair.

**Interviewer:** Sure. Yeah. Do you have any idea, at any point, did she report that kind of a problem?

**Subject:** Ah yes, I think so. My older brother lived here with her. He had diabetes was married and he just sort of had a place to stay here, so he managed most of that for her. She was getting old even then. But, he handled that. Whether that was good or not I do not know. I was up in Cleveland driving a bus.

**Interviewer:** When you were old enough to look for work was there any reason besides from, I guess you mentioned you went to Cleveland to look for a job, did you ever consider staying here and there weren't job? Or how did you make that decision?

**Subject:** I worked for excavating from the deep mines for about nine months. I went into the army and got away from here and my eyes got opened. And I said 'I don't have to work in those mines.' I went to Cleveland to work for a beryllium company and the Cleveland transit system. There were a sawmill up here that I worked. Started when I was 17. I worked that for a couple of years. Ely Thomas, I don't know if you've ever heard of that....

**Interviewer II:** To get back on the house part - you said your mother was knocked off her chair one time by a blast?

**Subject:** Oh, That was just a figuratively speaking.

**Interviewer II:** It would shake the house? I guess my point, what I am driving at is was there structural damage to the foundation and the house? Was there actual walls where the drywall was cracked?

**Subject:** No doubt there was. Well like I said it ruined the aqua flow for the well and they did drill a new well. But .....

**Interviewer II:** That was the coal company came in once apparently your family reported it.

**Subject:** Well we ran out of water we couldn't keep from complaining.

**Interviewer II:** They obliged to drill another well and they were successful or what?

**Subject:** Yes they were. Well, gradually the well filled up and to get to that point, I remember just before my Mom died that the well filled up to the point where the pump on the bottom got sucked in by, where I had to take it out and cut part of that off a try to repair the damage that was done.

**Interviewer II:** Is that the same well that is being used out there now?

**Subject:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there were any real benefits to this community with the surface mining being adjacent to it? Do you see any benefits that you could talk about?

**Subject:** There probably was at the time they were here, there was more money spent here that is natural. But no - the people moved and the money didn't stay here and the coal left. There may have been. There had to be something but I do not know what it would be.

**Interviewer:** You said that people left. When do you think people started to leave? During the mining from impacts or later on?

**Subject:** Oh no, well eventually they got the coal out. When the coal ran out then the coal company quit and these people, a lot of these people traveled with the strip job. Where ever the strip job was they would go there and live and when the strip job left they left. I assume that they kept their jobs, I do no know. But, what I am saying is that the jobs were temporarily here. And temporary means temporary. They left.

**Interviewer:** The people who lived here before the mining, they stayed? And are still here or?

**Subject:** No, this is West Virginia. Constantly people use to go to Cleveland, or they use to go to Cleveland, now they are going down South to work. Wherever the jobs are that is where they would go. Young people don't,..... it doesn't grow here because there is no work here.

**Interviewer II:** During that time, the center of activity possibly for the miners and the time that those mines were active, was that Summersville, maybe?

**Subject:** Well for the most part what looks like a barn down there, that was called Duffy's grocery store. They had a pool hall on one side and the other side they sold beer, at one time, but I

think at that time they sold groceries. If you wanted to see the people that worked up on the hill, then you went down to Duffy's.

**Interviewer II:** And that is just right down ....

**Subject:** You can see it from here. That white building down there.

**Interviewer II:** Ok. okay I see it.

**Subject:** It looks a little bit like a barn. They use to have a gas station there. That is what I would call the center of town. Of course they went to Summersville. Like me I live in Craigsville and I go to Summersville probably once a week. When we run out of something I can't get up there.

**Interviewer:** So you could say having a little grocery store for the community might have been a benefit for a little while? Or was that something you didn't really go to? That just the miners went to?

**Subject:** To who? No. My Mom didn't buy groceries there. She brought her groceries in Summersville. She would plan it so that maybe once every two weeks she'd go to get salt and whatever she needed. And you could just to make it easier you would get it all at once.

**Interviewer:** Do you think from your experience of talking to your mother about it, that did she ever consider moving or did the coal company ever talk to her about buying out her home? Why do you think she stayed, I guess is what I am asking?

**Subject:** Well, it was just a mindset. Probably like, it is like you lived somewhere and that was your home and that is the way she felt about it. No, she wouldn't sell the place.

**Interviewer:** Do you know if they ever asked her about it?

**Subject:** I do not think so, no. They didn't need it.

**Interviewer:** Right they weren't going to mine here.

**Subject:** Ok, my Dad didn't own the coal. All he was selling was the surface rights. No, there is no reason for them to be interested in this property. They were interested in the property they used to build a road across these bottomlands and that was about it. And they wanted the property to run the road up the hill for the mines. But the actual farmland - they weren't interested in.

**Interviewer:** Did anyone ever talk to them about the sludge in the creek?

**Subject:** Well sure, my Dad did. As a matter of fact he brought suit against them. That is how he got the money to buy the shovel to operate to come up the creek and clean it out. And I told you

that story about the sides of the creek it made that higher and the run off water couldn't get into the creek in the right places. My dad was getting older and he wasn't farming any more. And I was the youngest of the boys and when we left that stopped the work.

**Interviewer:** Some of the other things we wanted to try and find out was, as I asked you, how much interaction there was between the company and the community before the coal mining came in. And one of the things that now I am sure you know is that they get posted in the newspaper, the permit, information when they get a new permit or expanding.

**Subject:** I have seen that.

**Interviewer:** Have you seen that, yeah? Do you know if your mother or anyone with you at the time ever saw anything like that or knew what was going on because of what was posted in the paper?

**Subject:** Well, the company came here and they told them whatever it was that they wanted. I don't know what you are saying, what, that so the community could rise and say that we don't want this? Or something like that?

**Interviewer:** Well no, just so to find out if individuals are aware.

**Subject:** I don't see what your point is - that is why I am trying to find out. Individuals were aware. Individuals who had the property, it was just legal. And they would try and contact him. Now, joe-blow down the street didn't care. He didn't then, probably don't even now. But he didn't care.

**Interviewer II:** I think the point is, it is pretty understanding why the coal company came to you, I mean your father, your parents, for being property owners. But they decided, just like you, that we understand that people that are not affiliated in terms of owning property or working at the mine, they don't know what has been going on around. They don't know possibly the activities that exist in mines, when the permits might be issued,.....My one questions is, how did they actually post those permits in the papers? In the legal ads? Or....

**Subject:** It can appear anywhere in the paper. Actually there are 4 or 5 together of them, maybe on the back of the first page you will see one.

**Interviewer II:** But it is pretty good size? I know back in Pennsylvania where we are from, they get put in a legal notice where it is very fine print that even people with very good eyesight almost have to .....

**Subject:** Right. Well that is the way it is here.

**Interviewer II:** I was just sort of curious is it a quarter ad or something on a page?

**Subject:** Now that you mentioned it. The people that did this on this side were from Pennsylvania on this side. Now on this side I don't know. But ..

**Interviewer II:** So the coal companies on either side here, where not affiliated? They were different outfits?

**Subject:** As far as I know. Who knows? They could be? I am not a legal beagle.

**Interviewer II:** I guess we were curious if people if they did describe to a local newspaper or happen to pick one up, if they actually realized that the activity of the mining company in terms of the permits?

**Subject:** There is no active group that opposed anything like that. That I know of. Most people will say, "oh good you are coming in. There is going to be mines! There is going to be money!" But it is not like it use to be.

**Interviewer II:** Do you think that there is a sentiment today that if a mine would actually come in, now granted - the mines that are existing are probably what is going to be there for awhile, but if a new mine would happen to come in, do you feel the public's perception would be favorable?

**Subject:** There would be not opposition that I am aware of.

**Interviewer II:** They see that as ... I don't want to put words in your mouth. Do they see it as economic incentive or actually at bettering their lives.....

**Subject:** Some how or another they do. It just the mine didn't help us. That I could see. I mean it didn't help me. I don't know if it helped my dad in the end. It didn't help him because he took the money and put it back into the farm. I don't think he knew, and I don't suppose anyone did, what the after affects would be of the strip. And by the time he found out about it, it takes a while for the dirt and rocks to wash down, by the time he found out about it, they were virtually gone. He did manage to go to a tenant, and Tassa Coal Company by that time was gone out of business and you know how it is. Some other company was working there. Anyway, he did, I think get some money from Tassa Coal Company. They just dissolved after they got through stripping. I am sure they were aware of all of this stuff. Like you said, they were from Pennsylvania they started stripping up there long time before they moved here. I am sure they knew what they were doing and they knew what problems would happen. But, this Tassa Coal Company no longer existed, and doesn't today as far as I know.

**Interviewer II:** Do you think the environmental impact, nobody really, they were thinking if a coal company comes in, or the benefits of a coal company are more an economic benefit ..



**Subject:** OH, you are talking about a different time period. At that time period, yes. People like the idea of a coal, and the people would come to work and spend money and etc... But, it like I said I don't think anyone understood what the downside was.

**Interviewer II:** Like the environmental impact?

**Subject:** Right.

**Interviewer II:** To the a natural environment?

**Subject:** You can see what we think of it now. Because nobody is here.

**Interviewer:** The other part I think, of what Alexa is asking the question too, in terms of population, is that it makes sense there are no jobs here that, why, what is the incentive .....

**Subject:** Oh, well, ok we talked about this before. A lot of people had to go somewhere else to get a job in Pennsylvania, Florida, wherever it was. Now they are getting to be my age and retiring and where do you think they are going to come? They don't have to work any more and this isn't a bad place to live, if you can afford it.

**Interviewer II:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Subject:** So that is what I think happens. My brothers never did come back. They choose to die instead, and my sister. They never did come back.

**Interviewer II:** What is the population like around here now verses what it was like back in when the mining companies were here and possibly before the mines. Well actually you folks, hen your dad bought the property was the population.... seems likes there was granted an area where to have people move in?

**Subject:** Good point. Which area are you talking about?

**Interviewer II:** I say just the Werth area just in this general area where we are talking about.

**Subject:** There was nobody here unless they are retired or ... This guy over he works for some kind of medical outfit. There are probably at least 60 percent less than there use to be. As a matter of fact Werth up there that use to be, incorporated and you could get a meal there. A boarding house and all that is gone.

**Interviewer II:** In that population or that activity that was once there, was that even attributed at all maybe to the economic benefit that the coal company had.

**Subject:** It had nothing to do with it.

**Interviewer II:** No relationship at all in your opinion?

**Subject:** It was just brought in from out of state, for the most part.

**Interviewer II:** But do you say a lot like yourself being retired.... now we understand your relationship with Werth - you do not actually live here now. You live in Craigsville?

**Subject:** Do you want to hear this story?

**Interviewer II:** Well, what I was getting at too was that the other people that might live in this area, that might be retired, do they actually have ties to this area?

**Subject:** Yes.

**Interviewer II:** They didn't actually have ties somewhere else and decide to buy a place in this area because they thought it was a nice area.

**Subject:** No. No. It was just like you said without ties, I would never come back here. But my Mom was living in this house by herself and she had no one to look after her. She pleaded with my wife to get us to come here. I didn't get along with my mother because I didn't know she having a mental problems and she was kind of rough. But yes, so I came back. We moved our furniture in here and we stayed three weeks. And we had to rebuild the whole side of the house. The water was in it and it was just old. My son and I did. And she just kept getting more demanding and more demanding. Just how much can you give? My wife said either leave there or I am leaving you. And all that. You know how that goes. But any way, so I went to Craigsville and bought a house up there. Not particularly because I liked Craigsville because there aren't that many suitable houses around.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else that we haven't asked you about, that you wanted to mention? Your community life here and what it was like?

**Subject:** Most of what I would be doing is bitching about the strip job and how they did. But I didn't have anything to do with that because I wasn't old enough. And now I might I don't know. But we were just taken back by something we didn't know about. By we, I mean my father. I didn't have anything to do with this. It is probably the reason you guys are doing the study. There are probably other people like us.

**Interviewer II:** I know that is the main thing these studies often look at whatever existing data is out there. Never really sort of, they view all what's, sort of, right there at the moment. Like focus on the mining how in terms of their production, sell off, employment. They never really get to the community the people that actually lived here or had ties to the area and actually sit down and come here. We work out of an office in Harrisburg and who we work for, they have offices maybe in a

bigger city areas and really aren't into getting out or getting in touch with the local community. And one of the ways we have identified to do this is to actually talk to folks like you.

**Subject:** That is a good idea.

**Interviewer II:** This really gets your honest opinion of what the situation ..... We have other interviews scheduled this week and Alexa is coming back again another week to actually talk to other individuals like yourself. To just sit down and ask frank questions like we have and just sort of get your honest opinion. Just candid insight as to how things occurred. How things evolved. What we are trying to do is establish some patterns. What was it like maybe before the mining operation opened up? What it was like during? And what it was like after the mining?

**Subject:** Well, my dad had this farm and like I said my brothers would help work and I worked and we had a horse and all those fields of corn and all that. We had a hog and we lived. That is the way we lived. Now, about the time we were ready to leave. The coal company came in and he sold the land. The farm got ruined. And I do not know what would have happened if the situation, if the times hadn't worked out right. Because we didn't have place to raise corn and do all that we did.

**Interviewer II:** What is the future? You had said you and your son are fixing the house up for a family member?

**Subject:** Oh, ok. This is my son's friend.

**Interviewer II:** Ok.

**Subject:** This is "specific name". He gives me advice. He is fixing the house up. I do not own the house. I got one third of it. My two brothers got a third each and they died and their kids..... So, he is going to live here I suppose.

**Interviewer:** Your son is going to fix it up to live her?

**Subject II:** Yes.

**Interviewer II:** Do you see any, say for example if you wanted to sell out of the family, do you see any problems? Does that worry you as to how quickly or how long it might take to sell the property?

**Subject:** No. I have my ....

**Interviewer II:** What my question is, do you think that maybe the perception of people knowing there was mining here, that possibly the house might have some damage to it that might not be apparent? And do you think that perception or what they might be thinking considering the proximity to the mine might have devalued the property?

**Subject:** Oh the property, I had that appraised before my mother died because we ran a little low on money for a while there and the government was going to come in and take our farm away. And so I got it appraised in case they took it. But anyway ..... I don't, everybody ....that is a good point you're bring up there. My brothers knew what went on down here. Whether their children do... well one of them owns a piece and the other two will probably get one shortly. The other part, the third of it. Do they know what happened? I don't think so, I don't think they know what they are getting into. But, I'll keep my third as long as my son wants it. Whatever. I like to have family interaction.

**Interviewer II:** It is one thing if your farm here has stood out and there is not activity such as mining that may have done some possible, like you have already identified some damage that might have been caused by it. I am just sort of curious if any property values would have been impacted directly with or without what had happened here maybe fifty years ago in terms of the mining....

**Subject:** I think property values have definitely probably decreased because if someone bought this for a farm. Now you know that now the farms are big farms. A small farm it isn't the most desirable thing to do any more. It wasn't as far as I was concerned back then. This would not be that any more. About all you can do, the way I see it, is you could build, this land up here was used for pastureland, it was cropland down here below the road. The only thing I could see is some one might want to build a house here or something and work at Wal-Mart or something. I don't know.

**Interviewer II:** So, you don't see, I don't know, just to give an example, back where I am from we are often seeing retired individuals might be moving from larger urban areas. I live in, I grew up in a very rural area. And they like that. They like getting out of the city. They like having maybe a small farm they can so call tinker on. Coming here maybe staying on the weekends or actually eventually move here full time until they would eventually pass away and that is a piece of property they can keep in their family then. To pass on. I'll just ask the question. Do you see that as a pattern in this area that might have people moving in because it might be a desirable area to retire in? Its actually very beautiful around here.

**Subject:** Ok in conjunction with what you said. They built this Route 19, now b \_\_\_\_\_  
(count 362)

**Interviewer II:** OH, we drove down it. It is very pretty.

**Subject:** And now before we had that I don't think it would have been a very good idea. But now that they have that it is much better and in addition to that we are getting some medical facilities here. Where you don't have to go to Charlestown to get a bypass or whatever pokes you to death.

**Interviewer II:** Some major medical surgical procedure.

**Subject:** When you have stroke like I did last spring.

**Interviewer II:** Oh wow. Well, you are doing quite well then.

**Subject:** Oh no, it is just this one side.

**Interviewer II:** Left side. Well if you wouldn't have said anything I would not have noticed.

**Interviewer:** Not a bit.

**Subject:** I always try to hide that when it comes to beer time.

**Interviewer II:** I think you see the point of our interview today. I think we have tried to establish or at least try to see if there is any pattern of pre-mining activity in terms of community function itself. During the mining and what may be occurring here today after the mining operations.

**Subject:** Ok, mining operations in this area have been shut down long ago. Most people probably don't even remember. They probably weren't even born then. It is just some thing that happened.

**Interviewer II:** It is long since forgotten about because of the time frame of when it started?

**Subject:** I guess the new generation comes in and grows up. Especially now because of the anthrax.

**Interviewer:** What time do you think they finished the Route 19 about?

**Subject:** What time do I think they finished it? Probably 1975.

**Interviewer:** So about 25 years?

**Subject:** Well not finished like it is now. They keep finishing it. It use to be just two lanes, now it is four lanes all the way. They started this in seventy-five probably. It took quite awhile to get that done, so... That is probably a long time period. The only time I would see it is when I came home from Cleveland.

**Interviewer:** It looked a little different every time?

**Subject:** It got better all of the time. It use to have to go through swampland and winding roads.

**Interviewer II:** The back way home, so to speak. But that was the main roadway home?

**Subject:** I am surprised so many of us made it.

**Interviewer:** The only other thing that I think that I wanted to really ask you about is did you or your mother and father ever talk about the coal trucks going by your house? And was there a change in the community because of that kind of traffic? Or did they take another route than?

**Subject:** Well, the coal trucks didn't come by our house. Do you know where Muddlety is?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Subject:** They have a siding there where they loaded the coal onto the trains, right there. So, where the road goes by that white building over there, the farthest part of the farm... That would be the west of the farm. The farthest part of it. They would make a left there and then just go down to Muddlety. The coal trucks made a little noise but, we didn't complain. No I don't remember that the .....

**Interviewer:** Probably the most noise you heard is the blasting then?

**Subject:** The blasting we heard, yes. And maybe the trucks a little bit.

**Interviewer II:** In terms of debris, like fly rocks or anything, from the blasting activity that might have came down off?

**Subject:** Oh yeah. There just are rocks. Oh, I don't know if it came while they were mining, or when they leveled it off and plant grass and everything. After I got down here my mom was ill and I was taking her to the hospital all of the time. So, I didn't have time to take care of the rocks. Then I started having medical problems.

**Interviewer:** Well, we certainly appreciate you taking your time to come talk to us. It is very helpful.

**Subject:** You know for what you did, you probably could have come to my house and we could have been a bit more comfortable. This the outside is ... It is something, maybe like you said, it may help someone.

**Interviewer II:** That is the whole thing. We are not the decision makers we are just trying to do the data collection on it. And of course, the powers-that-be will possibly consider what we ....

**Subject:** Well in my opinion it could have been run a lot better than it was with my father. But then again we are talking how many years ago.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, you also have to realize that some of the environmental policy, like NEPA, you know and all those environmental protection type agencies. The environmental protection agency itself didn't evolve until way after these mines were here.

**Subject:** Oh yeah, I see these other mines around Powell Mountain and they all have grass on them.

**Interviewer II:** There are a lot of other impacts that are being looked at. This is just for the community aspect of it in terms of the mines. There is a whole environmental component too that they are looking at in terms of other studies that are going on.

**Subject:** Well you can't see it now, but there use to be a big mountain up on top of that mountain there. Well it is the same mountain, but there was a big knob. It was a lot higher and everything. They just took every thing that they didn't want and threw it over the hill and then hauled the coal down the mountain. And that is just what they could do. And we suffered impacts, not at the time it was happening, but nature took it course from everything that came down here.

**Interviewer:** Did they do any reclamation on that? Did they plant anything up there?

**Subject:** Oh, I think that someone, it looked like maybe someone, planted some locust trees. Now I don't know those were natural or if they planted them there.

**Interviewer:** Umm. Umm. It might have been someone who came along later and did it?

**Subject:** It may have been some kind of ....., I don't know if it was reclamation or what. Probably if anybody did it, the State did it. Now that wasn't done until much later.

**Interviewer:** Yes, they didn't start doing that or requiring that until the seventies.

**Subject:** I came down here most of the time because my Mom was sick and I would be taking her to the hospital, trying to get her medicine or something. Cutting the grass.

**Interviewer:** Other things were on your mind...

**Subject:** Yeah, you are trying to keep two households. And that is very difficult.

**Interviewer II:** You had no family or friends or people that you knew that worked in the mines when you were here? Do you know of people from around this area?

**Subject:** Sure.

**Interviewer II:** And you said that most people moved out of the area to follow the mines.

**Subject:** No, these weren't my friends who worked in this mine up here. I was young and they were forty or fifty years old.

**Interviewer II:** But they weren't, they weren't acquainted with your Mom or Dad or anything?

**Subject:** No. Oh no. I told you I worked in the deep mines, well I excavated. Yeah I knew people up there. "Specific name" runs a used car dealership out on Route 41 and the other people they went to California.

**Interviewer II:** So all of their labor basically, they pulled their labor in from elsewhere?

**Subject:** Which mines are you talking about?

**Interviewer II:** Well either one. The surface mines lets say. Did they, did the labor pool, did the workers that they used....

**Subject:** This company used a lot of people from this area. This company basically had their crew when they came in. I guess it depends on the company and how it is set up.

**Interviewer II:** That is another aspect of it too. When a company comes in are they actually looking for the local people for their labor force or at least to help make up their labor force in addition to what they have?

**Subject:** They didn't have any rule against hiring local people. I knew at least one person that worked for them, he greased up the shovel. Up at this mine quite a few people that lived around here worked for as excavators.

**Interviewer II:** What would happen once that coal company moved out? ...the coal was mined and they moved elsewhere? What would those people do, who lived her locally and worked at the mine? Do you know where they went if they moved with the mine? Did they keep their job?

**Subject:** Well, my two bothers worked at this mine and basically that started slowing down a bit. They had both been in the service and they went to Cleveland and took the GI bill and learned skills. But the one brother used his skill the rest of his life. The other one got diabetes and he came back and stayed with Mom until he died. Well, what you are asking is are these remedies or whatever and they are not. Everybody has a different set of circumstance and everybody has something different than, ... Actually, when I got our of the Army I took a plane from Seattle, Washington to Cleveland and my brother wanted me to stay there and he got me to apply to a job where he worked. But anyway I did take that job. But no, I feel that happens all over the place. Whatever connections people have they certainly use those more than they use the coal company.

**Interviewer II:** Right.



**Subject:** No, it is “Goodbye, Thank you Mama.” when the coal company gets through with you.

**Interviewer II:** So, if basically if they had ties here and lived here they’re more apt to stay here than follow the coal company? At least in your experience?

**Subject:** No, they are more apt to go to Wyoming or Cleveland or somewhere there is the possibility to get a job. That farm work, it is like I said, not only can the big farms out farm you, but that is hard work and you do not get paid.

**Interviewer II:** My Dad use to do the crop farm, so I know a little bit about that and it is not a lucrative business. If you are a small gentleman farmer and just a small time operation, you need to have a bigger operation to...

**Subject:** Oh exactly. Things have advanced in that fifty years to the point I might, like you said be, like someone comes here and raise a garden because I wanted the fresh vegetables and to see it grow, and all of that. But commercially no. Not even a tiny bit.

**Interviewer II:** It is very expensive just for the instruments you have to get involved with and a lot of expense. Not just in the operations but ...

**Subject:** My son wants to buy a tractor for him. ... And guess who he’d like to pay for it? Anything else?

**Interviewer:** No, I think that is everything I hoped to talk to you about. Unless you have something, like I said, that you want to talk about.

**Subject:** The complaints I got, you hear them over and over again. I don’t want to be redundant as far as my conversation.

**Interviewer:** I think you have given us a lot of good information.

**Subject:** I am not sure it’s not the same thing you will get everywhere else.

**Interviewer II:** That is a good point. But that may also confirms some things. I mean if you keep hearing things over and over again that maybe indicates to us in a general way, that these thoughts and perceptions are true. So what you might be thinking is the same as people we will be interviewing this week and that is sort of confirmation and that maybe possibly more of a ...

**Subject:** Yes, well I was just trying to give you information. This didn’t affect me that much. I, probably my life would have been the same whether the coal company came or not. At least up to now. I inherited this part of it. No this probably didn’t make any difference to me.

**Interviewer:** Probably a fair assumption that it made a difference to your parents and their life here? Or no?

**Subject:** I couldn't see that it did. Money was so,... you worked for a dollar an hour back then. Money was scarce. It probably,... like I said there were five of us and then we had my grandma lived here. She didn't help. We all had to get fed. But no like I said we raised most of our own food. Anyone who lived here worked here. My dad saw to that.

**Interviewer:** Well, in large part it didn't necessarily change?

**Subject:** Well, we don't have the fields and everything, but yeah it probably psychologically might have. But as far as money is concerned I would say probably not.

**Interviewer:** I really appreciate your talking to us "specific name".

**Subject:** Well it has been a pleasure.

**Interviewer II:** Thank you very much for your time.